

Graywall Farms

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Testimony of Robin A. Chesmer in OPPOSITION of House Bill 6350
Elimination of Farmers Sales Tax & Fuel Tax Exemptions

I am in strong opposition of any effort to eliminate farmer exemptions on sales tax and fuel tax as is proposed in HB 6350. If these exemptions are eliminated it will place a tremendous financial burden on Connecticut's farmers and consumers. In the case of Connecticut's dairy farmers, who are already facing extreme financial hardship, it will be the 'kiss of death'.

In these extremely challenging times we cannot be so short sighted that we destroy our farms and agricultural infrastructure. Connecticut agriculture provides many benefits to our residents now and for future generations. Our farms supply fresh local food, food security, economic returns, quality of life, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities and many environmental benefits.

Farms supply food to our residents and food should not be taxed. Connecticut's dairy farms are currently facing the most serious financial challenges that any of our seasoned farmers have ever experienced. We are in the midst of a terrible financial crisis. The milk price is set by the Federal Milk Marketing Order and has fallen drastically to the point that it won't cover the costs of production. In order for dairy farms to keep operating they are forced to sell assets or borrow operating funds. Dairy farmers are *Price Takers*.....*Not Price Makers* and can't pass along any increases in the cost of production. To remove the sales tax and fuel tax exemption would be the 'last straw'. It would certainly be unfair to consumers and also force a large number of Connecticut's dairy farmers out of business.

The exemption on Sales Tax & Fuel Tax for farmers must not be eliminated. Please strike this portion of HB 6350.